

# DIME NOVEL ROUND-UP

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## Pluck, Perseverance and Pressure

A Study of Dime Novel Authors and Their Craft

By Lydia S. Godfrey

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## Pluck, Perseverance and Pressure

A Study of Dime Novel Authors and Their Craft

By Lydia S. Godfrey

In the latter nineteenth and early twentieth century, major dime novel heroes and heroines were well known and much beloved: Deadwood Dick, Old Sleuth, Frank and Dick Merriwell, Old Cap Collier, Jack Harkaway, Buffalo Bill, Nick Carter, Jesse James, and Diamond Dick—to name only a handful.

Well known as these characters were, what was less known was who created them, how their authors managed to write 30,000 word exploits week after week, installments which inflamed the imaginations of young readers opening new worlds and horizons to them. In fact, Theodore Dreiser gave credit in his autobiographical "Dawn" to the influence dime novel characters had upon him. "It was a colorful world they presented," he wrote, "impossible from a practical point of view and yet suggesting that freedom of action which we so often experience in dreams. How often at that time I trotted over the plains of Africa or Australia or Asia with these famous boy heroes . . ." (1) Yet no one gave much thought to who wrote these wonderful stories nor to how these authors sustained the pressures of the dime novel writing craft. In fact, little was known about the authors because they usually were unheralded and unsung. Customarily they were given stock names that were owned by the publishing house, names that were handed out and assigned like a weekly serial. Dime novel authors, therefore, were usually anonymous, known only to their publishers and, perhaps, to their colleagues.

A few major writers who worked for the Street and Smith publishing house, as well as for other publishers, from the 1890's to pre World War I, provide a random sampling of some of the important and representative dime novel authors of that period. Although many people called dime novelists "hack writers" because they wrote for salary and on demand, these authors were not hack people. They were honorable men and women, frequently as colorful as the characters they created, struggling like the rest of us, to make ends meet. Frequently they had some college or university training or post secondary training in a business college. Almost always they led full and varied lives, thus bringing to their writing a host of diverse experiences and perspectives. Although they wrote dime novels, many of them dreamed of the day when they would have sufficient time and money to write the great American novel. Though few of them reached this personal goal, they spent their lives writing dime novels for an appreciative and enthusiastic readership. For some authors this contribution was sufficient reward; for others, the cost, in human terms, was enormous. Many faced ill health, retirement, and old age without savings and without hope. For the most part, they had

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nothing to fall back on; their final years loomed large and lonely. Their careers are truly stories in pluck, perseverance, and pressure.

The writing career of Laura Jean Libbey, for example, illustrates the pluck required of a successful dime novelist. Although reviewers hardly ever regarded Libbey's stories seriously, Libbey took HERSELF seriously and that was what mattered. Showing uncommon chutzpa for a late nineteenth century authoress, she kept herself constantly in public view. She called on booksellers, wrote a column of advice in the newspaper, appeared in vaudeville, traveled around the country, wrote plays and short sketches, in addition to her dime novels, and edited a publication in which she printed stories by her friends and then charged THEM for the privilege of being published.(2)

Libbey, who wanted to write "for the masses,"(3) usually wrote popular romances with working girl heroines. Her emphasis, however, was on their love lives, not their work lives. Libbey usually had three major stock characters in her stories.(4) The working girl was usually a "Little" someone: a "Little Leafy," a "Little Lottie," or a "Little Ruby," who, at age sixteen or nineteen, supported a beloved dependent. She was always virtuous and virginal, a paragon of innocence and beauty. She ALWAYS remembered her humble origins, no matter what heights she attained in her inevitable marriage to the wealthy handsome hero, who was, of course, stock character number two. Libbey's stock character number three was the bold villain who usually appeared on page 2, twirled his elegant moustache, eyed "Little Leafy" and made an improper advance. For the remainder of the plot; the heroine was shuttled among these and other characters. She was chloroformed, gassed, smothered, choked, or stabbed BUT, no matter what happened to her, she always survived.

Libbey's popular romances had a wide appeal to both women and men. To unmarried women, her characters spoke words they yearned to hear, for example, ". . . if Heaven intends you for a wealthy husband the Lord will always send him to you."(5) Furthermore despite the fact that she featured a lecherous male in almost every story, Libbey publically expressed her complete faith in the male sex. "I write of men as I find them," she said in an interview once, "loyal, noble, brave, with a chivalrous reverence for true womanhood, and who hold that purity in women is the rosebloom that jewels her existence."(6) With such appeals to both women and men, it is little wonder that Libbey had a wide readership.

Perhaps, however, it was in Libbey's spirited handling of her writing affairs that she most clearly showed her pluck. First of all, she used her own name in her stories, almost invariably following her by-line with this humble appraisal of her work: Laura Jean Libbey—"The greatest living Novelist, whose stories no author Has Ever Been Able to Equal, and whose Fame as the Favorite writer of the People has Never Been Surpassed."

Secondly, Libbey handled her finances well; she earned anywhere from \$50,000 to \$60,000 a year. When an interviewer reminded her that neither Rudyard Kipling nor Anthony Hope earned that much, Libbey replied with characteristic spunk: "When did either of them write a book that sold like my "Ione, the Pride of the Mill" or "Leonie Locke? When did either of them earn \$60,000 a year? That's MY income"(7) To make \$60,000 a year, at the turn of the century, took pluck, indeed.

Another characteristic dime novelists shared was perseverance. One who illustrated this attribute well was certainly William Wallace Cook, who, under his own by-line or any one of twenty pseudonyms, wrote about many of dime



noveldoms famous characters: Nick Carter, Buffalo Bill, Diamond Dick, Gentlemen Joe, and the later Frank and Dick Merriwells. Three major examples demonstrate Cook's perseverance: his work habits, his invention, Plotto—an automatic plot builder—and his persistence in continuing to write.(8) As a prolific author, Cook took meticulous care with the way he worked and with his story records.

Unlike other dime novelists who laborously wrote their 30,000 word stories each week in long-hand, Cook either typed his stories or hired three stenographers to keep up with him. In 1895 he earned as much as \$1500 a month from his dime novel writing.(9) In order to keep track of all his ideas for stories, Cook, a meticulous record keeper, invented a number of ways to keep track of news clippings he wanted to use for dime novel plots. Street and Smith customarily advised its authors that the daily newspapers "teemed with raw material" for dime novel stories, and Cook took advantage of this suggestion.(10)

At first he filled scrapbooks with news clippings, but the scrapbooks were hard to keep up. Next he used large manilla envelopes with each clipping filed by title; however, this method failed because he would forget the titles. Finally, after 1900, when index cards came into use, he developed an index card system to keep track of his clippings. On each card he listed the clipping topic and noted where he had filed the clipping. On index cards, Cook also kept track of every story manuscript he sent to publishers. This procedure was essential for Cook because he lived in Michigan and mailed his stories to New York. Each story had a card on which was listed its title, the life history of the manuscript, its number of words, the postage required to mail it to publishers, and notes on the story's acceptance or rejection.

While Cook was meticulous in his work habits, he was equally careful with his ideas for dime novel plots.

One of the most little known inventions with which he has been credited was an elaborate plot machine, aptly called Plotto.(12) This was truly a fiction factory which had an infinite number of classified plots, indexed, and cross-referenced, which could be chosen and sequenced by an elaborate system of numbers, letters, dashes, and asterisks. Thus, after using Plotto, when Cook finally settled on a plot it looked more like a calculus problem than anything else. A sample one would begin: 1342 Mystery

(a)(1357x) (1374x) (1389)

Succinctly, with the invention of Plotto, Cook reduced dime novel writing to a science. He had come up with a brain-saving mechanism which automatically combined and re-combined 1800 time-tested dramatic incidents to use in his fiction. He could simply take out plots and sub-plots from his Plotto system and insert them in stories just as easily as one inserts batteries in a flashlight.

To prepare his fiction mill, Cook had spent years collecting all kinds of plots from literature. He began with the Bible. On his Plotto charts, Cook resolved all fiction into three components:

First, there were A CLAUSES—which were scientific ways of choosing a leading character, such as a person in love, a detective, or a lawbreaker.

Secondly, there were B CLAUSES—these were choices which represented the earlier half of plot action, incidents such as falling in love, finding a clue, or robbing a train.

Thirdly, there were C CLAUSES—these were incidents which represented the climax and resolution of the plot, actions such as getting happily married,,



foiling a dangerous murderer, or dying dangerously.

Not only did Cook persevere in his strict adherence to careful work habits and plot plans but he also persevered in writing when it was a physical torture to do so.

In 1895 Cook was confined to bed in his Michigan home. He was in a state of collapse from threatened tuberculosis. Despite his condition, Cook stayed in bed and worked with a typewriter set up in front of him. An automatic word counter counted his words. By October 1896 he had to stop writing altogether because the process had become too painful for him. Then came the days when manuscripts were rejected, other stories earned less than Cook had expected, and, finally, came the dread year, 1897, in which he earned only \$426.00 from his writing, the sole means of his livelihood.(13) While doctors despaired of his life and told him he could not write anymore, Cook agreed to try a new treatment. Then, once again, he hired stenographers until he could become strong enough to work on his typewriter. Gradually, as he persevered, he became stronger and his income began to take an upswing, a trend which continued until by 1909 he was earning over \$5,000 per year, a goodly salary in those times.(14) By the time he died in 1933, he was said to have earned \$300,000 by writing dime novels. Clearly, his perseverance paid off!

That pluck and perseverance were essential attributes of dime novel authors is a fact to which the working lives of Libbey and Cook attest. Another fact of dime novel authors' lives, however, had frequently a sadder ring. Not surprisingly, the rigorous work demands of the dime novel publishing world, the uncertainty of manuscript payments, the inability to save money, ill-health, and the emptiness of retirement years—all placed cruel pressures on many dime novel authors.

A case in point is Saint George Rathborne, famous dime novelist and a high school schoolmate of William Howard Taft's.(15) Rathborne, had, in his heyday, written under thirty-eight pseudonyms and his own name for Street and Smith, creating countless dime novel serials about Dr. Jack, Buffalo Bill, and Old Broadbrim, to name a few. Rathborne had also been an editor at Street and Smith for several years. The last sixteen years of his life, however, were marked by financial humiliation and despair. His letters at Syracuse University provide poignant testimony of what it was like to have survived all the chaotic pressures of a dime novel writing career only to become an aging has-been—without money, without work, and without hope.

In the winter of 1922 Rathborne wrote Street and Smith of his "really deplorable condition." He hoped that his old employers would remember him "with the crumbs that fell from your table," and that they would send him just "some of the smaller fag-ends that from time to time might crop up." Writing that he was at the end of all his resources, Rathborne—proud even in his humiliation—said that "even the coming of a small sum—earned, I mean Mr. Smith, please believe—would bring a ray of sunlight amidst all this darkness."(16) Beseeching his old employer for help, Rathborne concluded: "... the iron ring has absolutely closed around me; . . . please try again to throw me the life-line."

Rathborne's other letters that year to Street and Smith show that his belongings had been in storage for three years, that he and his wife were dependent upon their sons and daughters for help, that they might even move South to save money because in the South there would be no winter coal bill.(17)



By April Street and Smith had put Rathborne back on the payroll at \$25 a week, a job to continue as long as work lasted, but the work did not last very long. The job of this once prolific dime novel writer was to rewrite and to revise two pages at the beginning of previously published dime novel series—Merriwell, Nick Carter, and Buffalo Bill stories so Street and Smith could get new copyrights.(18) Rathborne undertook each task and was glad to have work. When the jobs ran out, he wrote Street and Smith again remarking: "It is dreadful not to have something coming in regularly and realize that through force of circumstances you are temporarily on the shelf." (19)

Perhaps one of the saddest results of the pressures of dime novel writing took form in the life and death of Frederick Van Rensselaer Dey, scion of two distinguished New York families, graduate of Cornell University and New York University law school, best known in the dime novel world as the major author of the Nick Carter stories.(20)

Dey, who is credited with writing forty million words and over one thousand Nick Carter stories in his life time, wrote on the average of one dime novel a week for twenty years. If he worked a five day week, his daily average would have been 5000 to 6000 words a day. So great was his talent at creating and inventing that he never even plotted a story; he thought for three minutes and began writing. "I opened with an incident or a situation and let the story develop itself," he once explained. He never had time to revise. Writing six to nine hours a day, he wrote until "the story did not tell itself." Unlike William Wallace Cook and others who used the typewriter, Dey began his career by writing all his stories in long-hand because he was afraid he would be unable to compose on the typewriter. So successful was he at writing the Nick Carter tales, they were eventually translated into at least twelve languages.

Unfortunately, Dey had a drinking problem, one doubtlessly acerbated in no small measure by the pressures of his dime novel writing life. He was, furthermore, always plagued by lack of money. Even at the height of his career, there never seemed to be enough. In 1905 he wrote Street and Smith asking for an advance after he had just moved into a new home in Westport, Connecticut. The tradesmen were already pressing him for payments long overdue. "I am writing now at the rate of about 12,000 words a day," he explained. "... But I don't see how I am to get along until the end of the week without some money. I have exactly 50c in the house, and I must save that for postage ... " to mail in the next story.(21)

Lack of money was, for Dey, a life-long problem. Only four days before his death he lost his beloved home in Nyack, New York, because he could not keep up with payments. At sixty-one he had no savings and no security. He went to a New York City hotel on 27th street and put a bullet through his head.

His final letters to those he left behind are moving portrayals of how a once glittering world ended for him. To one friend he wrote, "I can't stand the gaff ... Everything's gone to smash and me with it ... " To another, "... I'm just tired out and I want to try the long sleep ... I can't stand the thought of growing old and becoming a burden." To his wife he explained, "My engine has gone dead in the air and—there is no safe landing in sight!"(22)

In conclusion, not much has, as yet, been written on the arduous lives of dime novel authors, on the attributes they needed to survive, or on the agonies they endured. Until far too recently they have been pretty much dismissed

as second class writers of a second class literature—thus totally ignoring a unique and vital period in American literary history. Hopefully, times are changing and dime novel authors will be researched, re-evaluated, and restored to their rightful human dignity in terms of their pluck, their perseverance, and their pressures.

### Footnotes

- 1—Theodore Dreiser, "Dawn: A History of Myself" (New York: Horace Liveright, 1931), pp. 125-26.
- 2—Helen Waite Papashvily, "All the Happy Endings" (New York: Harper and Brothers Publishers, 1956), pp. 205-06.
- 3—Papashvily, p. 202.
- 4—Papashvily, pp. 203-04.
- 5—"Clippings of Interest" Scrapbook, Box M-55, Syracuse University; hereinafter referred to as "Clippings of Interest."
- 6—Papashvily, p. 206.
- 7—Papashvily, pp. 206-7.
- 8—"Clippings of Interest."
- 9—John Milton Edwards, "The Fiction Factory" (Ridgewood, New Jersey: The Editor Company, 1912), p. 56.
- 10—Edwards, p. 64.
- 11—Edwards, pp. 64-67.
- 12—All information about Plotto comes from "Clippings of Interest."
- 13—Edwards, pp. 60-71.
- 14—Edwards, p. 61.
- 15—Albert Johannsen, "The House of Beadle and Adams" (Norman, Oklahoma: University of Oklahoma Press, 1950), II, p. 231.
- 16—Saint George Rathborne to G. C. Smith, 2 February 1922.
- 17—Saint George Rathborne to H. W. Ralston, 23 October 1922.
- 18—H. W. Ralston to Saint George Rathborne, 7 and 11 April 1922.
- 19—Saint George Rathborne to H. W. Ralston, 10 November 1922.
- 20—All information about Dey in "Clippings of Interest."
- 21—Frederick Dey to Street and Smith, 18 January 1905.
- 22—"Clippings of Interest."

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### CHANGE OF ADDRESS

- 135 Louise Harris, 395 Angell St., Apt. 111, Providence, R. I. 02906  
 61 Thomas J. Mulcahy, M. P. O. Box 2630, Niagara Falls, N. Y. 14302  
 66 Stephen Press, RR 2, Box 104, Paughquag, N. Y. 12570  
 303 Richard L. Scharnhorst, 3255 Gold, Wichita, Kansas 67217

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## SOME PSEUDONYMS IN JUVENILE SERIES BOOKS

By Stanley A. Pachon

Nowhere, with the exception of the Dime, Nickel novels and the Weekly Story Papers have pseudonyms and stock names been used as prolifically as in the juvenile series books, mainly put out by the cheaper book publishers. Very little effort has been made over the years to solve these "names." A few have been cleared up but the large number are in the limbo of anonymity and it is doubtful if most will ever be identified at this late date.

The Stratemeyer Syndicate has spawned the greatest number of stock names. Deidre Johnson in her "Stratemeyer Pseudonyms and Series Books" is a very welcome effort, but here too is a paucity of information linking real names to the various stocknames and the volumes they wrote for a given series. There has been a humorous observation, that if the Stratemeyer Syndicate had charge of National Security not a whisper of U .S. plans would fall into unfriendly hands or anybody elses for that matter!

To try to penetrate this "Literary Curtain" has baffled many researchers. I doubt that it was the wish of most of the authors writing for the Syndicate to be that secretive but the conditions laid down by Stratemeyer forced them into silence as to their contributions. It has puzzled many what the Syndicate gained by this policy of silence. There appears a ray of light on the horizon which may lift this curtain of anonymity in the near future. Happily some of the authors have broken their "vow of silence" and some welcome information has surfaced.

A good many years ago, a good friend of mine passed on to me two typed sheets that he also received from a friend of his who had received them from the very prolific author, St. George Rathborne, either late in 1913 or early 1914 and gives a list of various series books he wrote up to that time.

Under the Stratemeyer listing he gives the following.

(Webster Series) Larry the Life Saver. Dick the Bank Boy.

Boys of Columbia High Series. Under the name of "Graham B. Forbes." First 6 volumes.

Outdoor Chums Series. Under the name of "Capt. Quincy Allen." First 6 vols.

Saddle Boys Series. No pseudonym given but published under the "Capt. James Carson." First 4 volumes.

For A. L. Burt he wrote the following:

The Boy Scout Series. Under the pseudonym of "Herbert Carter." 8 volumes.

Motor Cycle Boys Series. (Rathborne gives his choice of a pseudonym for this series as by "Julian Oskamp" a character he used in his stories. It is evident that the publisher did not view this selected pseudonym with a favorable eye. When the books appeared they carried the name of "Ralph Marlow." They also renamed Rathborne's selection of The Motor Cycle Boys Series to the Big Five Motor Cycle Series.)

Broncho Rider Boys Series. In 4 volumes. (Here again Rathborne's choice of the pseudonym of "Alexander R. Laird" was overruled and the name of "Frank Fowler" was substituted. Rathborne had used "Alexander D. Laird" during his popular novel writing days and this may have influenced the publisher against it.)

For the New York Book Co.

Hickory Ridge Boy Scout Series. Under the name of "Capt. Alan Douglas." 6 volumes.

The Motor Boat Series. Under the name of "Louis Arundel." 6 volumes.



Motor Cycle Chums Series. Under the name of 'Andrew Carey Lincoln.' 6 volumes.

The Bird Boys. Under the name of "John Luther Langworthy." 5 volumes.

The Boy Scout Series. Under the name of 'Major Archibald Lee Fletcher.' 6 volumes. (Hudson in his Bibliography erroneously attributes all 12 volumes to George (H)arvy Ralphson (1879—). Rathborne wrote Boy Scout Rivals, Test of Courage, Signal Sender, On a Long Hike, Woodcraft Lesson, Signal Sender.

Three other Series are given not connected with any publisher.

The Fred Fenton Series. No name given or publisher. 4 volumes. (Published under the name of Allen Chapman. Publisher Cupples and Leon).

Banner Boy Scouts. Under the name of "George A. Warren." 3 volumes. (Published by Cupples and Leon).

Uncle Sam's Service Series. One volume under the title of "Bob Spencer, the Life Saver." No publisher is given or "author's" name. Rathborne must have sold this projected series to Sully where the first volume appeared under the name of "Capt. Taylor Armitage." Sully appears to have had some problems as the second and last volume appeared in 1918. The series was to cover the adventures of a group of brothers who had joined the various U. S. Government Service Depts.

Young Pioneer Series. 4 volumes. Under the name of "Harrison Adams" and published by L. C. Page and Co., Boston.

There appears to be some confusion with some as to Rathborne's authorship of this series. On the typed list Rathborne takes credit for it and the Stratemeyer Syndicate is not mentioned with this series. In all the biographical data that Rathborne supplied to reference works he has always claimed credit of authorship. As far as it is known Stratemeyer has never challenged this. It is doubtful that Rathborne needed help in writing this series as has been suggested. Rathborne was a professional writer as his 250 volumes of juvenile books show. One explanation of Stratemeyer's connection with this series is that he helped Rathborne secure a better publisher.

Another odd fact emerges around this series. When Stratemeyer's daughters began renewing the copyrights on the older series, they gave "Harrison Adams" as the pseudonym and Edward "C" Stratemeyer as the author! Since Rathborne was dead who was to contradict them.

The number of volumes given in this list is not an indication that Rathborne did not write the remainder of the volumes in the series it only indicates the volumes he wrote to the end of 1913.

John Henry Goldfrap (1879-1917) is credited with the pseudonyms of "Captain James Carson," "Freemont B. Deering," "Marvin West," "Howard Payson," and "Captain Wilbur Lawton" all for Hurst. He is also credited with the pseudonym of "Charles L. Wrenn." Nothing has surfaced under this name, but the strange part is that to many of Goldfraps books the illustrator is given as Charles L. Wrenn! It could be that to increase his income he illustrated the book also. This is not an isolated case as W. Crispin Sheppard who authored the 15 volumes of the Rambler Series illustrated them all.

Henry Altemus of Philadelphia had a good small staff of writers turning out series books for him under their own names and pseudonyms. Frank GLINES Patchin who used the variation of his name on his books as Frank GEE Patchin. H(arrie) Irving Hancock and Miss Josephine Chase who appeared only under pseudonyms, in fact very few books carry her real name. Hancock seemed to prefer seeing his own name on the various series. As to



Patchin he did not seem to mind seeing some of his work under pseudonyms.

In a published checklist of Girls Series Books, Miss Chase is erroneously credited with the four Grace Harlowe Series published by Altemus. She had authored the first two, The High School Girls Series and The College Girl Series. The Grace Harlowe Overland Riders Series and The Grace Harlowe Overseas Series were written by Patchin who lists among his series in his biographical articles. The four series appeared under the same pseudonym of Jessie Graham Flower. Patchin authored other girls series, among them the Automobile Girls Series by Laura Dent Crane, and The Meadow-Brook Girls Series by Janet Aldridge. Some other series he authored under pseudonyms were The Circus Boys Series by Edgar Darlington and Boys of Steel Series by James R. Mears and possibly others. His Iron Boys Series or Boys of Steel Series has a degree of authenticity seldom found in books of this kind. Mr. Patchin traveled widely all over the world with the exception of South America, began his career as a lawyer but turned to journalism which he found more congenial. He held various editorial positions on papers in different cities and from 1902 he wrote more than 200 juvenile books. It is rather odd that although Patchin died in 1925 his Ted Jones Series was published in 1928 under his name.

William Perry Brown authored the three volume Our Boys series for Saalfeld under the pseudonym of Captain William B. Perry (a play on his own name).

Noel Everingham Sainsbury Jr. wrote a number of series for Cupples and Leon, the Sorak Series by Harvey G. Richards and the Dorothy Dixon Series under his second wife's maiden name, Dorothy Wayne.

It has been suggested that the name of Leroy Snell who wrote a number of books for Cupples and Leon could be the pseudonym of Roy J. Snell. Correspondence with his grandson revealed no such connection. Leroy Snell was a real name of the author whose full name was Leroy Waite Snell born in Vermontville, Mich. Sept. 24, 1880. He became assistant editor to American Boy in 1919.

S. Omar Barker, the Dean of Western Story writers and Honorary President of the Western Writers of America, wrote the Brett King of Rimrock Ranch Mystery Series under the Grosset and Dunlap house name of Dan Scott. Mr. Barker is an extremely prolific writer, to date he has written over 1500 short stories, mostly on western themes; 2000 poems in over 100 periodicals; 1000 non-fiction pieces and 1000 humorous verses of four and eight lines. He also wrote humorous cowboy stories in Wild West Weekly as Phil Squires. His brother-in-law Wilfred McCormick wrote the Bronc Burnett Series as well as many other fiction books on athletic themes. Mr. Barker's wife who writes as E. M. Barker too is a prolific writer who has had over 150 stories and serials in various magazines.

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## THE CREATOR OF TOD MORAN

HOWARD PEASE, 1894-1974

By Jack Schorr

Howard Pease was born in Stockton, California on September 6, 1894. His parents were Isaac and Stella Newton. He received his A.B. degree from Stanford in 1923. He married Pauline Nott in 1927 and they had one child, a son, Phillip Howard. His second marriage was to Rosie Ferrier in 1956. He served overseas during World War I with the A.E.F. in a base hospital from 1918-1919. His political persuasion was for the Democratic ticket.

He was an author of adventure stories for young people. During and after his student days at Stanford, he was a merchant seaman, shipping out of San Francisco on various freighters. He later used his experiences at sea to give an authentic touch to many of his books, most notable the titles in the "Tod Moran Mysteries Series" which includes the award-winning "Heart of Danger." Early in his career Pease was a teacher in California and an instructor in English at Vassar, in order to supplement his income from writing. After the publication of his sixth book, "The Ship Without a Crew," he quit teaching and devoted full time to his writing career. He was the recipient of the Child Study Association of America Award in 1947, and Boys Clubs of America Award in 1949.

He created a very popular series in the Tod Moran Mystery Series, readily read and enjoyed by many young readers. This series contained more than 13 titles, from "Tattooed Man" in 1926 to "Mystery Hill" in 1961, ranging from adventure and mystery ("Hurricane Weather" and "The Black Tanker" to a dynamite-packed wartime story, "Heart of Danger.") "Hurricane Weather" is an absorbing tale of South Sea Islands waters, descriptions of deep sea life, and the roughness of the undercurrent are breathtaking. In "The Black Tanker," Rance the hero and Tod sail to China and encounter intrigue and shady dealings. With the clues and climax producing an enthralling adventure.

"Heart of Danger" is a story about Tod and the hero Rudy Behrens and their role in aiding the U. S. against a German traitor during World War II. The most popular works of the series is the "Jinx Ship," which pits Tod against many devilish and daring odds. Other adventures at sea include "Secret Cargo," a lively and vigorous account of one youth's experiences on a freighter bound to Tahiti. "Ship Wrecked" is a story of Renny Mitchum, a 16-year-old mess boy on a schooner headed for the Copra Islands. He enhances the authenticity of the stories by drawing heavily on his own experiences. The reality of his stories contributes to the excitement of each book.

He was a contributor of articles to many magazines. He maintained offices at 801 Sutter Street, San Francisco for many years.

He passed away on April 4, 1974 at Mill Valley, California. So ended an era of adventure stories extremely well written and based on this prolific writer's experiences for background that held the attention of young people and adults as well.

The Tattooed Man, 1926, Doubleday, illustrated by Mahlon Blaine.

Jinx Ship, 1926, Doubleday, illustrated by Mahlon Page.

Shanghai Passage, 1929, Doubleday, illustrated by Paul Forster.

Gypsy Caravan, 1930, Doubleday, illustrated by Harrie Wood.

Secret Cargo, 1931, Doubleday, illustrated by Paul Forster.

Ship Without a Crew, 1934, Doubleday.

Wind in the Riggins, 1935, Doubleday.



**Hurricane Weather, 1936, Doubleday.**

Foghorns, 1937, Doubleday, illustrated by A. O. Fisher.

Jungle River, 1938, Doubleday, illustrated by Armstrong Perry.

Captain Binnacle, 1938, Dodd-Mead, illustrated by Charles E. Pont.

Long Way, 1939, Doubleday.

High Road to Adventure, 1939, Doubleday, illustrated by Frank Dobias.

The Black Tanker, 1941, Doubleday.

Night Boat, 1942, Doubleday.

Thunderbolt House, 1941, Doubleday, illustrated by Armstrong Perry

Heart of Danger, 1946, Doubleday.

Bound for Singapore, 1948, Doubleday.

Dark Adventure, 1950, Doubleday.

Captain of the Araby, 1953, Doubleday.

Mystery on Telegraph Hill, 1961, Doubleday.

Shipwreck, 1971, Doubleday.

**References:**

"Twentieth Century Children's Writers."

"Something About the Author," Volume 25.

American Authors and Books.

**NOTE**

Dover Press, 31 East 2nd St., Mineola, N. Y. 11501 continues to reprint significant books in the detective field. The latest is **BODIES IN A BOOK-SHOP**, by R. T. Campbell, first published in 1946. Price in stiff paper covers, \$3.95.

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Researched By Robert E. Walters (See D. N. Roundup, June 1984, Page 49)  
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(Continued on next page)



and keen management saved the family, livestock, farm produce and some buildings and floated them safely to shore where it could be salvaged. This story is packed with thrills and adventures. About 360 pages, \$5.75 each.

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## LETTERS

Dear Ed:

I read each issue through from cover to cover the day I receive them and find them very interesting. Although my interest is in the old Nickel magazines, such as *Young Wild West Weeklies* and such, I find that articles on other subjects in your publication can be just as enjoyable to read.

I subscribe to many publications, which I read from cover to cover, but when I get caught up, I will dig out an old issue of my Nickel magazines and have a contented evening.

Sincerely, Walter W. Humberger

Dear Eddie,

The February 1985 issue of *Roundup* came around and I noted the letter of Bob Chenu and his explanation regarding *TRAILING THE AIR MAIL BANDIT*.

I did take the time to check this book out in the Cumulative Book Index and sure enough the 1929 edition was published by Wilde as I stated previously. Neither *TRAILING THE AIR MAIL BANDIT* nor *THE FLYING REPORTER* are even cited in the Cumulative Book Index for 1946 as reprints.

To take this a step further, I decided to check on the publishing firm of Wilcox & Follett in John Tebbel's monumental *History of Book Publishing in The United States*. Volume IV, covering the years 1940-1980, had this to say about Wilcox & Follett: "Among the others to take advantage of the postwar market for children's books was the Wilcox & Follett Publishing Co., for nearly a half-century among the country's foremost supplier of text books. In 1944, anticipating the upsurge to come, Follett entered the children's book field. . ."

So, it was not until 1944 that Wilcox & Follett began to publish juvenile literature and, therefore, could hardly be responsible for the publishing of the 1929 edition of *TRAILING THE AIR MAIL BANDIT*.

I cannot say whether or not Wilcox & Follett were deliberately trying to mislead the public into thinking that they had been publishing juvenile literature since 1929, but publishers are known to have come up with some ingenious ways of leading the public into all sorts of misconceptions. I would say had the legend in Bob Chenu's copy read: "Copyrighted 1929 Wilcox & Follett Co. / All Rights Reserved / *Trailing the Air Mail Bandits*," it would have meant that Wilcox & Follett had copyrighted the book in 1929. But with the first slash following 1929, I think we have to interpret that to mean just what it states on that line. This book was copyrighted in 1929 and nothing more than that. Caveat lector!

As an ardent proponent of the use of copyright record in literary research, I believe that the simplest way to have resolved this problem would have been to examine the original copyright record, which is exactly what I later did. That record confirms that *TRAILING THE AIR MAIL BANDIT* was copyrighted by W. A. Wilde Co. in 1929.

Best wishes, Victor A. Berch, Brandeis University



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